

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 13, 16-18 are amended and claims 2, 4, 6 and 8 are canceled. Support for the amendments are found at, for example, paragraph [0033] of the specification. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims at least in light of the following remarks.

The disclosure is objected to because the phrase "target region" on page 2, second to last line, should have been "target image." The objection is obviated by the above amendment. Thus, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim 4 is objected to because line 9, "pixel information correction device including" appears extraneous, and is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as having insufficient antecedent basis for "the pixel information correction device." The objection to claim 4 and 35 U.S.C. §112 rejection of claim 4 are obviated by the above amendment.

Claims 4 and 9 are objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claims 3 and 8. The objection is obviated by the above amendment.

Claims 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 because claims 16-18 each recites a program which is not statutory subject matter. The rejection is obviated by the above amendment.

Claims 1-9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0146173 (Herley), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,016,075 (Tsukada). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the §103 rejection of claim 1, Herley fails to disclose or suggest a region segmentation device that segments a target image composed of a plurality of pixels into a plurality of image object region by employing, as boundaries, portions where characteristics between the pixel change, as recited in claim 1.

Herley only discloses that an edge map is generated based on a set of transitions between the determined background color and other colors that correspond to the scanned image data and that a set of straight lines that correspond to one or more objects in the image data is determined by analyzing the generated edge map (Abstract). That is, Herley segments image data by generating an edge map and straight lines, and not by employing, as boundaries, portions where characteristics between the pixels change, as required in claim 1.

Tsukada fails to disclose or suggest that the image correction device corrects the pixel information of the pixels constituting the portions based on characteristic information of two image object regions that surround the portions, as recited in claim 1.

Tsukada discloses color correction processing by extracting representative color from a given image and by determining color correction parameter. That is, color correction is performed solely based on the characteristics of the input image. In contrast, in the present application, the image correction is performed in the portions of image based on characteristic information of two image object regions that surround the portions.

Thus, Herley and Tsukada, alone or in combination, fails to disclose or suggest that an image segmentation by employing, as boundaries, portions where characteristics between the pixel change and the image correction device corrects the pixel information of the pixels constituting the portions based on characteristic information of two image object regions that surrounds the portions. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Herley and Tsukada.

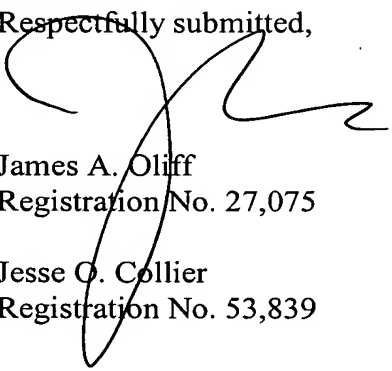
Claims 13 and 16 recite similar features to those discussed above in connection with claim 1, thus claim 13 and 16 are patentable over Herley and Tsukada. Claims 3, 5, 7, 9-12, 14, 15, 17 and 18 depend, indirectly or directly, from claims 1, 13 and 16. Thus, claims 3, 5, 7, 9-12, 14, 15, 17 and 18 are also patentable over Herley and Tsukada for at least the same reasons as claims 1, 13 and 16, as well as for the additional features they recite.

For the foregoing reasons, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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